

# The Palm Leaf

The Church of the Palms, 14808 N. Boswell Blvd., Sun City, AZ 85351

## A Letter from Paul



### *Top Ten List*

*10.Q: Christmas is on a Sunday, what are we going to do?*

*A: Celebrate! That's right, celebrate!*

*"Celebrate" is the simplest and yet the most profound answer to that query. Come & Join us!*

*9.Q: Are there any other details about Christmas day we need to know?*

*A: There will be no fellowship time after worship. PJ's are okay for that day for worship! Pastor Jim and I will both be here. Let your presence be your present that day!*

*8.Q: When are the Seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany? aren't they all just Christmas?*

*A: Advent begins our time and essentially means "waiting" – we're waiting on God's timing. The season of Advent includes four Sundays (Hope, Peace, Joy, & Love) and this year is from November 27 through December 24<sup>th</sup>. The Season of*

*Christmas is just 12 days long December 25<sup>th</sup> to January 5<sup>th</sup>. The Day of Epiphany celebrates when the wise men came – it's January 6<sup>th</sup>.*

*7.Q: What did the innkeeper tell Mary & Joseph?*

*A: There is no record of what the innkeeper did or did not say. We only know that there was no room in the inn available. This causes us to pause. Who can we provide room for during this season? Who is being shut out into the cold?*

*6.Q: Who saw the "star in the east?"*

*A: The Wise men, or Magi, saw the star and followed it. They were not kings. No one knows the number of magi, but three gifts were brought. What gifts can you bring during this holy season?*

*5.Q: Were the holy family immigrants?*

*A: Yes! They fled the wrath of Herod. Immigrants usually are fleeing the wrath of violence and/or extreme poverty. How can we welcome immigrants?*

*(Continued on page 2)*

*A Letter From Paul Cont'd*

*4.Q: Where do we find the Christmas story (the birth of Jesus) in order to check up on this top-ten list?*

*A: The gospels of Matthew and Luke tell us the story of the birth; Matthew is from more of Joseph's point of view while Luke is Mary's story.*

*3.Q: When will the choir sing during Advent?*

*A: The choir will sing December 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 18<sup>th</sup> culminating with their cantata on December 18<sup>th</sup>. There will also be special music throughout the season.*

*2.Q: What will Christmas Eve include?*

*A: Christmas Eve worship will include special music as well as communion, candlelight, and singing of beloved carols. Our service will start at 7:00 p.m. on December 24<sup>th</sup>. It is a great time to bring family and friends.*

*1. Q: Is December 25<sup>th</sup> really the day Jesus was born?*

*A: No one knows the exact day when Jesus was born. What is clear is that Christian leaders in the first half of the fourth century A.D. set the date on December 25<sup>th</sup> in an attempt to eclipse a popular pagan holiday in Rome, one that celebrated the winter solstice. If you want to know more about what Christmas really means, come to worship during these seasons of Advent and Christmas and experience what God holds out for you!*

*Shalom,  
Paul*



Lorena Lewis	12/01
Pat Durbin	12/03
Henry Nave	12/04
Sharon Christenson	12/05
Rhonna Fiihr	12/07
Ruthie Whitlock	12/08
Janet Bozgan	12/09
Eunice Hammerstrom	12/10
Terry Hanson	12/12
Carol Bryan	12/15
Leonard Silvester	12/15
Glenn Fiihr	12/17
Doris Hoy	12/17
Howard Schenk	12/18
Victoria McWilliams	12/19
Brian Hannon	12/22
Julie Nichols	12/22
Andrea Stefanov	12/22
Shea Darian	12/30
Cynthia Kunkel	12/30



# Notes from your Executive Board

at The Palms

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” 1 Peter 4:10 NIV.

Happy December and Merry Christmas to our Church of the Palms Family and Friends!

As Christmas approaches, we often think about the giving of gifts. According to Merriam – Webster the word gift has two definitions:

- Something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation
- A notable capacity, talent or endowment.

While gifts of Treasure are certainly awesome and necessary, what gift or talent do you have that might serve others?

Over the next few months the Volunteer Engagement Committee will be seeking to recruit members for the Boards and Teams that make The Church of the Palms the vibrant, active and amazing church that it is. Might you take this opportunity to prayerfully consider what gifts you could share within our church community?

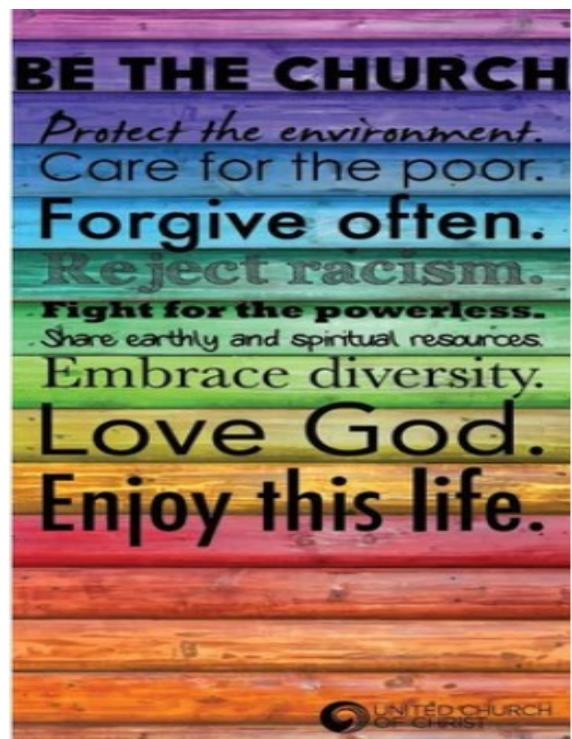
Do you have the gift of leadership? Perhaps you would consider an Executive Board position.

Do you enjoy technical/digital pursuits? Perhaps joining the Worship Team would

allow you to share your gift. Do you have a passion for learning and teaching? Perhaps the Life Long Learning Team would benefit from your knowledge and skills. Or perhaps you have a heart to extend a loving hand to someone who could use a bit of help – our Care and Support Ministry may be just what you’re looking for.

The VEC will be hosting a Ministry Fair on Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup> after worship where you can learn more about these and the many other opportunities available to share your God given gifts. We hope to see you there!

And, as always, God Bless You and Thank You for Being the Church!



# WORSHIP THEMES FOR DECEMBER

Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>: Second Sunday of Advent. Peace. Pastor Paul will be preaching. Read Matthew 3:1-10. We should go out into the streets and find someone who thinks they are alone and convince them they are not.

Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>: Third Sunday of Advent. Joy. Read Luke 1:46b-55 and Isaiah 35:1-10. Pastor Paul will be preaching. Mary sings the first Christmas Carol and it is in the past tense!

Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>: Fourth Sunday of Advent. Love. Our Sanctuary Choir will present "Love Came To Us".

Dec 21<sup>st</sup>: 3:00 p.m. The Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service will offer an alternative to the traditional services of celebration. Reverend David Klingensmith will be preaching.

Dec 24<sup>th</sup>: 7:00 p.m. Communion, Candles and Carols. Pastor Paul will be preaching.

Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Day. Today will be a time of stories and singing. Pastor Paul will be preaching.

## HART Pantry Christmas

Generous donors have already contributed the items that we have usually requested for our teens' Christmas bags so we won't be having our usual Christmas donation box. Instead we would appreciate having \$25 gift cards for Target or Walmart. The church's Script gift card program will have these cards available the first Sunday of the month.

HART's deadline for giving is December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your generous support of our at risk teens.

Jan Eckstein, HART Pantry.



Committee members we thank you for your minutes. Please continue to communicate with Joy when your next meeting will be held or canceled.

**ANNUAL REPORTS**—Please have your annual reports ready to submit to Joy **ON** December **30th**.

Thanks to Count Dracula (new member John Claiborne) who brought worms, dry bones, blood clots, pasture green salad, gravestone brownies to the Halloween I-HELP dinner.



**A little Christmas**

PRESENTED BY  
**VALLEY WOMEN'S ENSEMBLE**

 Sunday, December 4  
3:00 pm  
Church of the Palms  
14808 N Boswell Blvd  
Sun City, AZ

Saturday, December 10  
7:30 pm  
First Church | Pilgrim Hall  
1407 N 2nd Street  
Phoenix, AZ 

Scan QR code to  
purchase tickets  
Admission \$15.00  
Children under 12 are free  
Special Thanks to  
*The Shops in Uptown*

**Jim Alexander, Artistic Director  
Valley Women's Ensemble  
Jennifer Hoppe, Accompanist  
Valley Women's Ensemble**

**Tickets available at the door.  
You can also use the QR Code or use  
the link below!**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/d/az--phoenix/valley-womens-ensemble/>

**BLUE CHRISTMAS/LONGEST NIGHT  
SERVICE DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>**

"I'll have a blue Christmas without you. I'll be so blue just thinking about you. Decorations of red on a green Christmas tree won't be the same if you're not here with me."

Those lyrics by Elvis Presley can certainly ring true when we have experienced the loss of a loved one or have had some other crisis in our life. Seeing Christmas decorations, hearing Christmas carols can amplify the "blues," the loneliness that we feel. And, coupled with the long darkness of winter nights, we can feel that our grief will never end.

If you find yourself cringing at the idea of celebrating Christmas when there is going to be an empty place at the table, or someone missing beside you in the pew, then consider attending our Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service this year. It will be held on Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. The winter solstice gives us the shortest day and longest night on that day.

The Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service will offer an alternative to the traditional services of celebration. It will have time for acknowledging your pain and grief, and a time to remember and honor your loved one. Consider inviting someone you know is in pain to attend this meaningful time.



Congregation for Mental Wellness  
Welcoming | Inclusive  
Supportive | Engaged

National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line  
1-800-950-6264 <https://www.nami.org/help>

Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK

Suicide/Crisis Hotline TEXT 988

Translifeline 877.565.8860

Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 press 1

Pastoral Care—Pastor Jim Alexander 623.792.5295

<https://thepalms.org/Tools2Thrive>

## WHAT ARE THE HOLIDAY BLUES?

In a survey on the Holiday Blues

**64% say they are affected**

and 24% say the holidays affect them a lot.

## So, what are they?

The Holiday Blues are temporary feelings of anxiety or depression during the holidays that can be associated with extra stress, unrealistic expectations or even memories that accompany the season.

**This might include:**

Fatigue	Loneliness or isolation
Tension	Sadness
Frustration	A sense of loss

The difference between the holiday blues and clinical anxiety or depression is that the feelings are temporary. However, short-term problems must still be taken seriously because they can lead to long-term mental health conditions.

## Tips for avoiding the Holiday Blues

- Stick to normal routines as much as possible.
- Get enough sleep.
- Take time for yourself, but don't isolate yourself. Spend time with supportive, caring people.
- Eat and drink in moderation. Don't drink alcohol if you are feeling down.
- Get exercise—even if it's only taking a short walk.
- Make a to-do list. Keep things simple.
- Set reasonable expectations and goals for holiday activities such as shopping, cooking, entertaining, attending parties or sending holiday cards.
- Set a budget for holiday activities. Don't overextend yourself financially in buying presents.
- Listen to music or find other ways to relax.

## Remember

The holiday blues are short-term. Be patient. Take things week by week or day by day.



## CARE Corner

Brought to you by Church of the Palms' CARE Ministry

VITAS Healthcare offers some tips for coping with grief at the holidays:

Set realistic expectations of yourself. Decide if you can handle past expectations and responsibilities, or whether you want to continue them:

- Surround yourself with people who love and support you.
- Despite the temptation, try to avoid "canceling" the holiday. Make some time for yourself, but don't isolate yourself.
- Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger—allow yourself to grieve.
- Draw comfort from doing for others.
- Practice self-care. Get some physical exercise. Write in a journal. Give yourself permission to do something frivolous, just because.
- Avoid numbing yourself with alcohol or drugs.
- Create a new ritual or tradition that accommodates your current situation.
- Light a candle in honor of your loved one. Hold a moment of silence or offer a toast to your loved one.
- Announce beforehand that someone different will carve the turkey or say the blessing.

### The Care Team Mission

Assist the Pastors when our community needs help spiritually, physically, emotionally or socially

## **Palm's of Jesus Day at the Heard Museum**

As Native American Acknowledgement month continued, the next offering was a field trip to the Heard Museum – one of Phoenix's finest, dedicated to Native Americans. The day was a perfect fall day with light breezes, bright sunlight, and temperatures that made you glad you had a jacket in tow. Mary Hoy navigated the Church of the Palm's Bus to Central Avenue with graceful speed, claiming to hit only one – or was it two – traffic lights along the way. Ten beautiful church members arrived to meet Andy for their special guided tour. Andy had spent a recent evening at the Heard Museum in the Main Gallery to ensure that he was prepared to share many anecdotes about the artists and their work which was on display there. The bus arrived a bit early, so the group stood out in the Entrance Courtyard of the museum listening to the flowing water in the fountain and stretching in the sunlight while getting to know each other better. At 10:00 am, they were allowed to enter and begin the experience of Native art. Andy was the last to pay and moved into the first display venue of magnificent, inlaid silver boxes.

Andy looked to his left through the Performance Space at the door to the Main Gallery where the paintings he wanted to talk about were hanging. The Performance Space is a two-story room that houses the entry to the Main Gallery, which was completely empty, except for scaffolding holding painters who were hard at work repainting the space. The entrance to the Main Gallery on the far side of the room was sealed closed by a metal garage door – NO ENTRY. Andy led the group around to the side of the space and upstairs as he thought there was another entry – opps, there wasn't another entry, and Andy needed a new plan. The Main Gallery of the Heard was closed.

Andy asked a museum employee for guidance to the new exhibit, and she showed him an unmarked door, explaining that there was a film which explained it completely right inside. The group followed Andy into the room, and the film began – almost 45 minutes of watching a Salt River Native make a clay pot in the traditional style, which led to some great conversation about Native pots. They then learned that the film was on a loop, and they would have to wait until the new exhibit made it to the front of the loop. We then asked for directions to the Boarding School Exhibition. We wound through different rooms until we arrived at a courtyard in the back of the museum, which was originally the Heard family's mansion and served previously as the entrance to the museum. Kay's friend, Pat, shared a wonderful story about people ringing the bell, and the door being answered by Mrs. Heard to show them through the museum in its early days. The story brought joy to the group as we headed to the second floor Boarding School Exhibition. Their momentary joy would soon change.

Entering the Boarding School exhibit brought a new level of shock to the group as we stood at a sign in a huge photograph that said: "Manifest Destiny." Our new member, Raymond Larson shared a quote with me: "I still can't get over the immediate visual of 'Manifest Destiny' and its connection to how we have grossly mistreated the native peoples who preceded the influx of European culture then a side trip on the way home to the original site of the Indian School in Phoenix an added reminder" God was revealing the plan for the group and Andy's heart jumped in the new direction. Immediately, Andy directed the conversation to our Interfaith Conference Retreat with Kaitlin Curtice and her book, NATIVE. As we walked past the chair where they were held down to have their braids removed, another comment of shock came from the group.

Each new section or room in the exhibit elicited more new and profound comments of recognition of what this culture had committed against the Native Culture – as Andy added notes from the conference such as “Intergenerational Trauma,” taking the Indian (savage) out of the person, and dissimilation designed to destroy the culture. Dr. Phillip and Lurene Ladd added a quote: “We really enjoyed the museum – especially after the Interfaith retreat. The section with the boarding school was moving. It is sad how we treated and still do treat indigenous people.” Hearts were moved by the Spirit of God as we wandered in that section for almost a full hour. Terry Starr added: “We all experienced a very moving experience about the ‘Indian Schools’ around the country it drove home the agony these young people went through in our trying to socialize and assimilate to our ways”

We then enjoyed an alfresco lunch in the courtyard of the museum with delicious gourmet, healthy foods. This left just a few minutes after lunch to visit the Gift Shop – one of the finest art galleries in the country, and to wander through the new exhibit “Made from the Stars.” Oneness waits patiently right in front of our faces to be seen. We are all made of things from the stars. Thank you, Great Creator God.

A note from Kay Klinkenborg who created and led this very informative interfaith conference included this quote: “The moment we choose to love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love, we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others.” (Bell Hooks) The Church of the Palms stands at the leading edge of social justice.

By Andy Strong Jordan





## Service Project Craft Group



As I sit here at my computer, composing an article for the December Palm Leaf, it is only November, feels like January, but you get it in December. This is an end of the year "Thank you" to everyone that has given material, yarn, money, etc. to us for our work. It is with "Thanksgiving" that we can use them to make quilts, hats, scarves, soap bags, and other items for I-Help, Hart Pantry, our table in King Hall, and many other needy people and children.



Here is Opal Willy wrapped in a quilt. Nancy Mueller, Lead Monitor of our I-HELP group, has written a few lines for us. "The opal gemstone is said to bring good karma and a renewed sense of hope. That's what our member and friend, Opal Wille, wished when crafting her quilts. Her last quilt, given to an I-HELP graduate, made a special connection. The recipient immediately wrapped the quilt around her body and said. "My grandmother's name was Opal and she was a quilter. This feels like I am getting a warm hug from my grandma. It's extra special. Thanks to everyone, I am hopeful about my future." This makes our work so worth while.



This baby blanket and baby hat, also has a story. All homeless people are not elderly. These items are going to one of their graduates that is pregnant and will soon deliver. These baby gifts were made by our group and will be given to the mother.

Lastly, we have added new items to our table in King Hall. We have Christmas cards and decorative towels, a small portion of the knitted and crochet winter hats, and even a toddlers warm winter outfit, ideal for sitting in a stroller or car seat. Please, come and browse. The Holiday is almost upon us.

The Church of the Palms  
Sanctuary Choir  
Presents

## *Love Came to Us*

Sunday, December 18, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Come hear the story of love born in a manger and in the hearts of people down through the ages. Anthems, carols and the spoken word will inspire you to share God's love with all peoples. Invite your friends to worship.



## December 1-16, 2022

<b>1 Thursday</b>	11:00 (KH) Special Luncheon for bus riders 1:00 pm (BR) Worship Team 2-5 pm—(OS) Feet-N-More Shower Ministry @ Kitzo 2:30 pm (MR) Choir Rehearsal	<b>2 Friday</b>	9:00 am (BR) VEC 10 am (BR) Ministry Fair Setup
<b>3 Saturday</b>		<b>4 Sunday</b>	7:30 am (B2L) Shared Conversations 9:00 am (MR) Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am (SA) Sunday Worship 11:00 am (KH) Fellowship Hour and Ministry Fair 3:00 pm (SA) Valley Women's Ensemble
<b>5 Monday</b>	4:00 pm (KH) I-HELP	<b>6 Tuesday</b>	9:00 am (OS) Men's Fellowship @ George's Café 10:00 am (BR) VEC 4:00 pm (BR) Jump Start
<b>7 Wednesday</b>	9:00 am (BR) Service Project Craft Group 9:30 am-5:00 pm (OS) Feet-N-More Shower Ministry @ The Grove	<b>8 Thursday</b>	2:30 pm (MR) Choir Rehearsal
<b>9 Friday</b>	12:00 pm (BR) Social Justice Team 1:00 pm (BR) Criminal Justice Team	<b>10 Saturday</b>	
<b>11 Sunday</b>	7:30 am (B2L) Shared Conversations 9:00 am (MR) Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am (SA) Sunday Worship 11:00 am (KH) Fellowship Hour	<b>12 Monday</b>	10:00 am (BR) Executive Meeting 2:00 pm (BR) Board of Trustees Meeting 4:00 pm (KH) I-HELP
<b>13 Tuesday</b>	8:00 am-1:00 pm (OS) Feet-N-More Shower Ministry @ Surprise 10:00 am (BR) Operations Council 1:00 pm (BR) Ministry Council 4:00 pm (BR) Jump Start	<b>14 Wednesday</b>	9:00 am (BR) Service Project Craft Group 2:00 –5:00 pm (OS) Feet-N-More Shower Ministry @ Kitzo 1:00 pm (BR) Board of Stewards
<b>15 Thursday</b>	1:00 pm (BR) Care Support 2:00 pm (MR) Choir Rehearsal <b>PALM LEAF DEADLINE</b>	<b>16 Friday</b>	9:30 am-5:00 pm (OS) Feet-N-More Shower Ministry @ The Grove

## December 17-31, 2022

<b>17 Saturday</b>		<b>18 Sunday</b>	7:30 am (B2L) Shared Conversations 9:00 am (SA) Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am (SA) Sunday Worship 11:00 am (KH) Fellowship Hour
<b>19 Monday</b>	10:00 am (BR) Otherings & Belonging 4:00 pm (KH) I-HELP	<b>20 Tuesday</b>	9:00 am (OS) Men's Fellowship @ George's Cafe 9:00 am (BR) Creation Justice 4:00 pm (BR) Jump Start
<b>21 Wednesday</b>	9:00 am (BR) Service Project Craft Group 10:00 am (BR) Evangelism & Growth 11:00 am-3:00 pm (OS) Feet-N-More Shower Ministry @ The Grove 3:00 pm (SA) Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service	<b>22 Thursday</b>	2:30 am (MR) Choir Rehearsal
<b>23 Friday</b>		<b>24 Saturday</b>	7:00 pm (SA) Christmas Eve Service
<b>25 Sunday</b>	7:30 am (B2L) Shared Conversations 9:00 am (MR) Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am (SA) Sunday Worship 11:00 am (KH) Fellowship Hour	<b>26 Monday</b>	<b>Office Closed</b>  4:00 pm (KH) I-HELP
<b>27 Tuesday</b>	<b>Office Closed</b> 9:00 am-4:00 pm (KH) Red Cross Blood Drive 8:00 am-2:00 pm (OS) Feet-N-More Shower Ministry @ Surprise 4:00 pm (BR) Jump Start	<b>28 Wednesday</b>	9:00 am (BR) Service Project Craft Group
<b>29 Thursday</b>		<b>30 Friday</b>	<b>Annual Reports Due to Joy !!</b>
<b>31 Saturday</b>			

SA=Sanctuary, KH=King Hall, BR=Boardroom, B2L=Bridges to Learning, OS=Offsite, HY=Hybrid (in person at the Church and online via thepalms.org/bridges),